

The Crucible, Act II: Discussion Questions

1. What does the reader learn about the Proctors' marriage through the discrepancy between what John Proctor does before he sees his wife and when he talks to her?
2. In what ways is Miller's use of dialogue effective in the first two pages of this scene to show the rift between the couple?
3. What does Proctor's hesitation to travel to Salem indicate about his inner conflict?
4. Whom does Elizabeth call, "A mouse no more"? What does she mean by this metaphor?
5. Explain the ironic ultimatum the head of the court has given to those who have been arrested.
6. Explain the metaphor: "The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you."
7. What present does Mary Warren give to Elizabeth? What does her making it and giving it to Elizabeth foreshadow?
8. What does Hale's motivation for visiting the Proctors tell the audience about his personality?
9. In what ways does Hale question John Proctor's religious strength? (3 answers)
10. Explain how Hale tests Proctor's belief in God, as well as the irony in how Proctor fails Hale's test.
11. Explain Hale's quote: "Man, remember until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven."
12. List and discuss the validity of the evidence by which Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse are jailed.
13. Explain Francis' metaphor: "My wife is the very brick and mortar of the church."
14. If Mary contradicts Abigail, how is she "charging cold murder on Abigail"?
15. How is Hale a "broken minister"?
16. Explain Proctor's quote: "Vengeance is walking Salem."
17. How have Hale's opinions of the accused changed by the end of Act II.
18. Explain the demand Proctor makes of Mary Warren at the end of scene one and her significant response to his threat.
19. Explain who the two dynamic characters are in this scene and show their changes.
20. Explain the function of the symbols in this act (the rabbit, golden candlesticks and the poppet)

Scene ii

This scene appeared in the original production; however, it has not been performed in most productions since 1958. Arthur Miller deleted the scene in his later editions published prior to 1971.

1. Given the Puritans' view of the forest, what atmosphere does Miller create by setting this scene in the woods?
2. What evidence is there that Abigail's saintly reputation mentioned in Act II, Scene I is changing?
3. In what way has Abigail become the poppet?
4. Discuss the verbal irony in her line: "Oh John, the world's so full of hypocrites."
5. What motivation does Abigail give for making the world "white again"?
6. Discuss Proctor's implied motivation for warning Abigail of his intentions in court the next day.
7. Discuss the verbal irony in Abigail's line: "Fear naught. I will save you tomorrow."
8. What does the separate forest scene contribute to the play? Is this scene necessary to the overall plot of the play? Why or why not?